

Rep. Shay Schual-Berke

33rd District

The 2004 Supplemental Budget

(HB 2459) I voted **YES** for the supplemental budget. It restores some funding and addresses needs that were underfunded during the budget crisis of 2003. I particularly want to highlight that it:

- Increases community health clinics funding by 25%.
- Adds 3,000 more high-demand college enrollments.
- Saves health insurance for 20,000+ low-income children.
- Funds workshops and employment services for young adults with disabilities.
- Restores health benefit parity for public school employees.
- **Restores local mental-health services cut in 2003.**

Affordable Rx Medicines from Canada

(HB 2469, sponsor) The House voted 90-7 to save taxpayers over \$300 million annually by authorizing state agencies to buy less expensive prescription medications from Canada. Private citizens would also get help finding lower-cost Canadian medicines. **Local citizens identified this a top priority in my district survey.** I voted **YES**. *(Died in Senate).*

Stop Job Outsourcing

(HB 3187) A preliminary study indicates that 36 of 41 state agencies are outsourcing millions of dollars of work to foreign countries. The House demanded an investigation of why Washington taxpayers are subsidizing jobs overseas when there is high unemployment in our own state. It is also terribly disturbing to see that some businesses benefitting from tax breaks are also outsourcing jobs. I voted **YES**. *(Died in Senate).*

Public Works Trust Fund Loans

(HB 2859, sponsor) It is estimated that these loans will generate more than 11,000 construction-related jobs and over \$1 billion in economic activity. **Two loans help important local projects: Burien's 1st Avenue South Corridor Project (\$2 million) and Des Moines' Pacific Highway So. Redevelopment Project (\$5 million).** I voted **YES**. *(Signed into law).*

Kent Center for Advanced Manufacturing

(HB 2892, sponsor) This center, **a high priority for the Kent Chamber of Commerce**, would train workers for cutting-edge jobs and help small businesses convert technological discoveries into marketable products. I was able to obtain funding for the Center in the House budget. I voted **YES**. *(Died in Senate).*

Shutting Down Meth Labs

(SB 6478) At the request of law enforcement, the Legislature sharply restricted volume sales of "precursor drugs" used to illegally manufacture methamphetamine. I sponsored the companion House bill and voted **YES**. *(Signed into law).*

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Voting Record: The 2004 Session

State Representative
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33rd District

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May 2004

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

When I asked you and your neighbors what the Legislature's top priorities should be in 2004, you answered in overwhelming numbers: education, jobs and health care. In addition, more than three-quarters of those who returned my survey said that property-tax relief for senior citizens and action for affordable prescription drugs should be high priorities.

I'm pleased to report that, despite the brevity of the 60-day session, we made progress on these priorities and we also took significant steps toward reducing hunger and helping the poor and vulnerable of our state during this difficult economy.

This newsletter describes how I voted on selected issues in 2004 because I am accountable to you, and want you to know how I have represented you. To learn about any other vote or hear about any policy in detail, I hope you will contact me. Every legislator's complete voting record will soon also be available on the internet at: <http://www.leg.wa.gov/legislature>.

It is an honor and privilege to serve as your representative 12 months a year, not only when the Legislature is in session. I invite you to contact me by email, phone or letter if I can assist you and hope you will continue sending me your comments and ideas for legislation. Constituent suggestions have always been my best source for legislation.

Warmly,

Shay Schual-Berke, M.D.
State Representative
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Senior Property Tax Relief

(SB 5034; HB 1071, HB 2436, sponsor) We made 40,000 more senior households eligible for property-tax relief by raising the income ceiling for senior tax-relief from \$30,000 to \$35,000 and allowing deductions for Medicare insurance, boarding home and adult family home costs. I voted **YES**. *(SB 5034 signed by the Governor)*

Quality Home Care

(HB 1777, sponsor) The Legislature implemented the people's home-care initiative (I-777) by providing 50¢-per-hour raises and investing in health-care benefits for 26,000 care-workers. I voted **YES**. *(Signed into law)*.

Honoring School District Levies

(SB 6211) State law limits school levy funding to a percentage of state funding for schools. This legislation protects previously approved school levies from losses due to 2003 state budget cuts to schools, and increases state levy subsidies. **This protected \$1,390,000 for Kent schools and \$236,000 for Highline schools.** I voted **YES**. *(Signed into law)*.

Education Reform

(HB 2195, SB 5877). Refinements to education reform: (a) give students up to four tries to pass the Washington Assessment of Student Learning test needed for graduation in 2008; (b) require assessment standards to be clarified and prioritized; (c) provide better information to parents on their children's progress; and (d) create alternative assessments for students in special education. We also improved Learning Assistance Program funding to benefit more schools. I voted **YES**. *(Signed into law)*.

Charter Schools

(HB 2295) The Legislature authorized the creation of 45 charter schools, which the public has rejected twice in statewide votes. We shouldn't create new charter schools when our regular public schools are underfunded. I voted **NO**. *(Signed into Law)*.

Mental Health Parity

(HB 1828) The House supported my proposal to require insurance companies to treat mental illnesses equally with other illnesses. Mental health parity laws in other states have improved health, worker productivity and helped businesses. I voted **YES**. *(Died in Senate)*.

Stem Cell Research

(HJM 4030, HB 2336, sponsor) I authored legislation to encourage ethical stem cell research that may discover elusive cures for diabetes, cancer, heart disease, Alzheimer's disease and many other illnesses. The Health Care Committee endorsed my legislation and its job-creating potential, but misguided fears of human cloning (which my proposal banned) and the shortness of the session blocked further progress. I voted **YES** (in committee).

Hungry Families Act

(SB 6411) Too many children go hungry in Washington, which ranks in the top-5 hungriest states in the nation. A new law requires schools in high-poverty areas to have free or reduced-price food programs, including in summer, and reduces paperwork barriers to timely food assistance. I voted **YES**. *(Signed into law)*.

Mad Cow Disease

(HB 2299, HB 2802, Sponsor) To protect against "mad cow" and other diseases, we banned the use of "downer" or diseased cattle and created a system to track potentially diseased livestock more effectively. I voted **YES**. *(Signed into law)*.

Charitable Donations

(SB 6115) We eliminated state taxes on donations of golf rounds or other amusements that support charities, schools and other non-profit programs. A constituent first brought this issue to my attention, resulting in my sponsoring the House version of the bill. **The cities of Federal Way and Kent also asked for this exemption to help schools and scholarship funds.** I voted **YES**. *(Signed into law)*.

Research & Development Tax Credit

(HB 2546) This session alone the Legislature passed \$86.8 million in tax breaks to business which will mushroom into much more money in coming years. This single bill extends a special tax break that has cost Washington more than \$500 million since 1995 — despite inadequate evidence that it has resulted in new jobs as promised. I oppose the continuation of expensive tax breaks when they can't be demonstrated to accomplish what the legislation promised, especially at a time when we are forced to slash funding for education and essential services. I voted **NO**. *(Signed into law)*.

Cyberstalking

(HB 2771, sponsor) We made it a crime to use the Internet or other technology to threaten, sexually harass or torment victims. It was previously unpunishable. I voted **YES**. *(Signed into law)*.

Capital Budget

(HB 2573) The supplemental capital budget is modest, but is good for schools and colleges and funds important local needs. It has \$2.5 million for the Higher Education Center at **Highline Community College** and \$500,000 to ease the parking crisis at the college. **A threat to noise mitigation funding for Highline schools was averted.** I voted **YES**. *(Signed into law)*.

Stopping Domestic Violence

(several bills) New domestic violence laws require law enforcement agencies to have policies for dealing with charges of officer-involved domestic violence (HB 2392, sponsor); create fines for domestic violence offenses to support prevention and victim support (SB 6384); and add \$2 million for domestic-violence shelters and services (Budget). I voted **YES** on all. *(Signed into law)*.

Sexual Misconduct at Schools

(SB 5533) Some teachers guilty of sexual misconduct with students have transferred to other schools that were unaware of the offenses. A new law requires schools to share information about sexual misconduct. It also prohibits schools from sealing or expunging records of teacher sexual misconduct and requires alleged sexual misconduct with students to be reported to parents within 48 hours. I voted **YES**. *(Signed into law)*.

Nutritious Foods at Schools

(SB 5436) The biggest health threat facing America's children is obesity. To improve children's health, we required all schools to have effective nutrition and exercise policies by 2005, with a model state policy as a guide. I sponsored related House legislation (HB 2680) and voted **YES** for the Senate bill. *(Signed into law)*.

Genetic Discrimination

(HB 2772) My proposal to ban genetic discrimination by employers and life insurers passed the House unanimously, but didn't pass the Senate. However, we banned genetic screening as a condition of employment (SB 6180). I voted **YES**. *(SB 6180 signed into law)*.

Health Professions Discipline

(HB 2834, sponsor) The House overwhelmingly passed my proposal to increase patient safety by strengthening disciplinary procedures in the health professions and protecting whistleblowers who expose problems. It didn't become law. *(Died in Senate)*.

Helping Hospitals, Doctors and Family Clinics

(HB 2787, sponsor; HB 2788; Budget) I'm disappointed by the Legislature's inadequate response to the malpractice insurance crisis facing health care providers. However, we did take small steps that: (1) Grant civil immunity to volunteer health care workers in nonprofit community clinics and hospitals; (2) Pay liability insurance costs for additional retired health care providers volunteering their services in low-income clinics and hospitals; and (3) Provide nearly \$20 million to hospitals and clinics to help them serve people who have no medical coverage. My proposal to study how courts can improve the fairness and equity in non-economic damage awards also passed (in the budget). I voted **YES** on all *(Signed into law)*.